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Samples of Students' Writing

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June 1991
English 30
Diploma Examination

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from the

English 30 Diploma Examination

June 1991

Alberta Education
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SECTION ONE
INTRODUCTION

PURPOSES

The first purpose of this booklet is to illustrate and compare two important levels of expectation, or standards, that have been set for diploma examination writing, Satisfactory (3) and Excellent (5). The second purpose is to provide suggestions that we hope will help students to move beyond Satisfactory (3) writing by developing their unrealized potential for writing.

Sample papers from *Part A: Written Response* of the June 1991 English 30 Diploma Examination (see Appendix A) form the major part of this booklet. The papers illustrate approaches taken by the students who have produced writing at each of the two levels. These approaches are compared and suggestions to improve student writing for the diploma examination are provided.

CONTENTS

The sample papers are presented by level, in groups of three. The first paper in each group was used as the exemplar paper for training markers during the June 1991 marking session. The other two papers in each group were chosen, more or less arbitrarily, from those papers receiving consistent scores on all reporting categories (all threes or all fives). Each paper is accompanied by specific commentaries that discuss the paper in terms of the reporting categories used in marking (see Appendix B).

Section Two presents a selection of papers produced by students achieving the Satisfactory (3) level on the Minor and Major Assignments; Section Three presents a selection of papers produced by students achieving the Excellent (5) level on the Minor and Major Assignments. Both sections also include a general commentary about the level of expectation, or standard, under discussion. These general commentaries highlight any common features that exist in the papers.

A summary of the features that emerge at each level is also provided. Comments are made about patterns of approach that students who are writing at each level may have taken. Suggestions are made to teachers for consideration in aiding students to produce writing that is beyond the satisfactory level.

Each sample of student writing in this booklet is reproduced as it appeared to the markers; that is, in the student's own handwriting. Because of space limitations, the students' planning and drafting pages have not been included. However, teachers and other readers should note that research has demonstrated a high correlation between planning and successful writing. Consequently, planning for writing should be carefully considered in instructional strategies.

CONFIRMING STANDARDS

Before each marking session begins, a group of English 30 teachers gathers to read a representative sample of examination papers. From these, they select papers that are clearly illustrative of the standards defined by all levels of the scoring criteria. These papers are presented to group leaders and to markers during the training process.

The exemplar papers presented here (the first papers from each group of three) were selected by a group of teachers who acted as standards confirmers for the June 1991 marking session. Each paper was chosen to illustrate the level of expectation, or standard, described as Satisfactory (3) or Excellent (5) in the scoring guides (see Appendix B).

Group leaders, teachers specially selected to chair small groups of markers during the marking session, confirmed that the exemplar papers illustrated the standards described at the Satisfactory (3) and Excellent (5) levels. The exemplar papers were then presented to markers for training purposes at the beginning of the marking of the June 1991 diploma examinations.

MARKING PROCESS

Papers are scored on several different dimensions according to five levels of performance. A complete listing of both the dimensions and the descriptors of each level of performance appears in Appendix B.

Teachers who are selected on the basis of recommendations made by their superintendents do all marking. Selected teachers must be teaching the course during the school year that the examination is administered and must have taught the course for at least two years.

The first hours of the marking session are spent in an intensive training session that includes a review of the scoring descriptors as they relate to the exemplar papers.

Neither the students' names nor the names of their schools appear on the examination papers. Markers are advised not to mark a paper if they suspect that they recognize its source. They are instructed to disregard the quality of the handwriting in evaluating the papers and to return a paper unmarked if they think the handwriting could influence their judgments. They are also instructed to avoid marking papers whose contents or style call forth any personal biases.

No marks are placed on the examination booklets during the marking process; scores are recorded on separate score sheets. All papers receive three independent readings on a variety of scales (see Appendix B) and the median score on each scale is awarded. Provision is made for a fourth reading if the awarded scores vary to the extent that a student's final grade would be significantly affected.

CAUTIONS

The following cautions should be kept in mind, especially if the information in this booklet is to be used for instructional purposes:

1. **The papers selected represent only a small sample of the possible approaches to each assignment.**
   Even though three papers are presented to illustrate a Satisfactory (3) and Excellent (5) level for both assignments, it must be remembered that these are only three papers selected from hundreds, or even thousands, of papers at that particular level. Therefore, conclusions about common patterns of approach taken by students at that level must be formed in that context. We hope that the conclusions that we have put forward will stimulate further thought about the approaches taken and the strategies used by students in their writing.

2. **Neither the assignments presented in Appendix A nor the scoring guides presented in Appendix B are meant to limit students to a single organizational or rhetorical approach in completing any diploma examination assignment.**
   Students are free to select and organize their materials in any manner that they feel will best present their ideas. The writing in this booklet illustrates just a few of the many organizational and rhetorical strategies used successfully by students in June 1991.

3. **The sample papers presented in this document must not be used verbatim as models for instructional purposes.**
   Because these papers are sample illustrations only and because they are sample responses to a set topic, students should be cautioned not to memorize the content of any of the sample papers to use when completing classroom assignments or when writing future diploma examinations. It is the *approaches* taken by those achieving at the Excellent (5) level of performance that students should consider emulating, not their words or ideas.

4. **Readers should consider each student's accomplishments in light of the constraints of the examination situation.**
   Under examination conditions, students are able to prepare writing that we must consider as *first-draft* only. If students were given more time, and access to appropriate resources, we would expect them to produce papers of considerably improved quality.

SECTION TWO
SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING AT THE SATISFACTORY (3) LEVEL

GENERAL COMMENTS

Writing that earns Satisfactory (3) on the English 30 Diploma Examination represents acceptable writing for students graduating from the high school academic stream. The Satisfactory (3) level spans a broad range of writing. Some responses are at the lower end of the range and others are at the upper end, but all writing that earns a Satisfactory (3) does so because it can best be described by the descriptors at that level in the scoring guide (see Appendix B). In spite of the range, most of the writing at this level has a number of characteristics in common.

Minor Assignment: Personal Response to Literature

Thought and Detail: Responses at the Satisfactory (3) level are on topic and are generally focused and unified. The main idea is often predictable, perhaps because it is borrowed from the statement given in the preamble to the assignment. For instance, many June 1991 responses at the Satisfactory (3) level contain straightforward examples of the way in which "our capacity to imagine influences our lives, providing a sense of purpose that serves to inspire and motivate." Generally, responses consist of a personal incident related to a word or phrase taken from the literary prompt on the examination. Details chosen generally support the main idea.

Writing Skills: Writing at the Satisfactory (3) level reflects an understanding of the requirements of the assignment. The writing is clear but mechanical. Typically, responses are patterned after the explanatory statement in the preamble, or based on a word or phrase taken from the literary selection—such as "wood," "stream," or "girl"—and related to an experience involving a similar object, place, or person in the student's life. Usually, the experience is described chronologically, using suitable transitions. Choices may be made for effect; however, diction is often general and structures are simple. Attempts at more complex sentences sometimes result in awkwardness; perhaps choices are kept simple and straightforward to avoid errors. Conventions are generally controlled, even though errors of spelling, punctuation, grammatical agreement, and usage are occasionally made.

Major Assignment: Literature Composition

Total Impression: Writing at the Satisfactory (3) level is generally unified, coherent, and clear in meaning. The student's understanding of the literature chosen is correct but narrow, or accurate but missing significant details. A central idea exists and is developed through straightforward interpretation at the literal level or through partial understanding of the literature.

Thought and Detail: Writing at the Satisfactory (3) level is characterized by a conventional idea that may be a repetition of the statements in the preamble, rather than being generated by the student and directed by the literature chosen. For example, the statement from the June 1991 preamble, "The power of imagination may influence an individual in either a positive or a negative manner," becomes the thesis statement for many Satisfactory (3) compositions. The purpose of the preamble is to stimulate entry to the topic, and although some students use it as a springboard for their own unique or original ideas, students at the Satisfactory (3) level may depend on it. This is an acceptable approach, a typical response to the topic.

In addition, writing at this level usually reflects a narrow or literal interpretation of the literature chosen. The student knows what happened in the literature but does not fully comprehend its import or the observation about life made by the author.

Supporting details cited to develop the main idea are appropriate but general. They indeed support the thesis and reflect a defensible interpretation but are often listed summarily or sweepingly, resulting in a "bare bones" composition. The reader frequently must make connections and draw conclusions. The writing often reflects a perception of characters, actions, or whole stories in black-and-white terms; compositions often conclude with a moral or lesson learned.

Organization: Satisfactory (3) writing is often mechanical and functional in organization. Most compositions have an introduction that gives the essay a broad but general direction, followed by body paragraphs containing generalized detail and a conclusion that restates the main idea. Sometimes the writing is organized around a number of elements, as suggested in the examination's Guidelines for Writing section, to develop the controlling idea and give order to the presentation of detail. This is legitimate, but if done mechanically may result in a weakening of coherence, especially if logical connections between elements are not established. The essay often follows the plot of the literature chosen as a way of organization, because plot is a backdrop to revelation of character, development of dilemma, appreciation of irony, and so on. However, students sometimes lose sight of the controlling idea and essentially retell the story. Generally, Satisfactory (3) essays are organized in a clear and direct manner.

Matters of Choice: There are often inconsistencies in the Matters of Choice category at the Satisfactory (3) level. Much of the writing is uneven and displays some effective choices and some complex structures along with commonplace words and phrases and awkward sentences and/or fragments. Writing at this level is characterized by general diction and uncomplicated syntax, and is usually sincere, matter-of-fact, and conscientious.

Matters of Convention: Writing at the Satisfactory (3) level demonstrates general control of conventions. Given examination writing circumstances, and keeping in mind that this is first-draft writing, some errors that are present can be judged as lapses in control rather than lack of control, especially if spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct in other parts of the composition. However, at this level errors are commonly found in the handling of the apostrophe, grammatical agreement, punctuation of more complex sentences, and idiomatic use of prepositions.

Examples of writing that earned Satisfactory (3) on the June 1991 English 30 Diploma Examination follow. These examples demonstrate the range of writing skill at this level and many of the common characteristics of Satisfactory (3) writing.

STUDENT SAMPLE 3A (Minor Assignment Exemplar)

General Comments

This description of a practical use of imagination is appropriate and on topic. Supporting details are general, thought is somewhat repetitive—if you can imagine, you can do well—and the presentation is very matter-of-fact. Writing skills demonstrate control of conventions. This personal response was selected during standards confirmation to be presented to group leaders and to markers as an example of writing representative of Satisfactory (3) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

The chosen quotation "'had become a glimmering girl with apple blossoms in her hair'" provides an appropriate connection with the main idea, "I . . . imagine a desired result and then try and achieve it." A general explanation of visualization is used to develop the response—"I tried this technique before important matches, and it worked"—and reference is made to current uses of visualization for an "exam" or a "job interview." This appropriate response is clear, unified, and on topic.

Writing Skills

The writing is clear and relatively free from errors. Some good choices in diction include "parallels," "congratulating," and "accomplishment," and other choices are adequate: "many aspects," "then try and achieve it," and "It is hard to succeed." Syntax is controlled, but the majority of sentences are simple and begin with "I"; for example, "I felt that I had done this before" and "I have now learned to use techniques of imagining in my everyday life." The writing shifts from first to second person and back again. "Consequently" is used to show relationship, although most transitional expressions are basic: "then," this," and "now." Conventions are well controlled in this straightforward response.

Imagination Equals Success

The poem "The Song Of Wandering Aengus" by William Butler Yeats parallels how I have learned to approach many aspects of my life. Yeats talks about the fish that "had become a glimmering girl with apple blossom in her hair" and then ran away. I, too, imagine a desired result and then try and achieve it.

I became involved with visualization, or imagining, through athletics. I used to become extremely nervous during important games and consequently, my performance would suffer. I talked to my coach, and he introduced me to the practice of visualization. This is imagining yourself playing the game. You are playing very well. In fact, everything you do is perfect. You make the outstanding play to win the game. You imagine the crowd cheering and your coaches and teammates congratulating you. You experience this feeling of ~~a~~ accomplishment in your head. I tried this technique before important matches, and it worked. I was more relaxed. I felt that I had done this before. My performances improved dramatically.

I have now been learned to use techniques of imagining in my everyday life. I imagine myself scoring well on an exam or presenting ~~me~~ myself well in a job interview. If I imagine myself being successful, it gives me a goal to strive for. I have a desired result that I want to attain. I feel that I have had a taste of success and it gives me desire to ~~achieve~~ achieve this level of success.

It is hard to succeed in today's world. I feel imagination and visualization can ~~be~~ give me an edge to put me ahead.

STUDENT SAMPLE 3B (Minor Assignment)

General Comments

This response suggests that imagination is useful and positive both in childhood, when it provides variety and entertainment, and in adolescence, when it becomes a vehicle for self-reflection. The writing is sincere, confident, and generally clear, despite some errors in sentence construction. This personal response is representative of Satisfactory (3) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

The composition's unifying idea, that "imagining is a major part of growing up," is developed through two examples from the student's life. Imagination is equated with a "fire" in one's head, and the student consistently repeats that idea. Details given are appropriate and on topic. For example, as a young "daydreamer," the student often took bike rides in the woods, pretending to be "a spy or a business man" driving a motorbike. In this case, the "fire" was a "need to have fun." Later, as a young adult, the student drives a car "to Fish Creek Park" to "sit and think." Imagination has become a vehicle for self-reflection, a way to find "solutions to personal problems." The "fire" is also seen as a mental tonic when it is allowed to "burn freely" for a while. The student concludes by repeating the connection to the quotation from the poem and by summarizing supporting detail. The realization that imagination is a tool for self-reflection is particularly appropriate. The response is unified and on topic.

Writing Skills

Diction, with the exception of "diminished" and "solace," is general, even colloquial at times; for example "played a major part," "many a time," "considered useless to some," and "filled a hole." Occasionally, ideas are effectively combined in a sentence, such as "As a child I was labeled a 'daydreamer,' but what may have been considered useless to some, was an important part of my life." Some sentences are somewhat awkward, as in "I would ride my bike for hours and usually in order to just get away and think," or are actually fragments of sentences, such as "When I felt a 'fire' in my head to go out the woods or in my case ride my bike." Spelling and punctuation are generally correct. Errors made do not interfere with meaning or demonstrate lack of control.

When we are young we seem to imagine what we cannot see. Imagining is a major part of growing up in a world as large as this one. It influences ower goals and fears. Imagining what I have not yet experianced has played a major part in my life, especially when I was young. In W.B. Yeats' poem, "The Song Of Wandering Aengus" he writes:

"I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head", I can relate to this quote because I have had a similar "fire" in my head many a time.

As a child I was labeled a "daydreamer", but what may have been considered veless to some, was an important part of my life. When I felt a "fire" in my head to go out the woods or in my case ride my bike. I would ride my bike for hours and usually in

order to just get away and think. When I was very young I would pretend I was driving a motorbike and I was a spy or a business man. This was my way of giving myself a goal or a destination in my travels. By creating such a world for myself I filled a hole in my life when there was no one to play with. In this case the "fire" in my head was a need to have fun.

As I grew older my desire to create an imaginary world diminished and in its place a "fire" to find solace and peace. In this case I did go to the woods, Fish Creek to be exact. I would ride my bike, or now I drive my car, to Fish Creek Park and go to one of my usual spots by a river or stream to sit and think. This has help me settle "fires" in my head.

"Fires" burning from the need to find d solutions to personal problems or just "fires" with a need to burn freely. By listening to my mind's "fires" I have been able to solve many of my personal problems on my own.

W.B. Yeats wrote of a "fire in his head to go out to the woods. I have had such a desire many a time as a child riding my imaginary motorcycle as a spy and as an adult imagining by the river to settle my nerves.

STUDENT SAMPLE 3C (Minor Assignment)

General Comments

This personal response creates the impression that the student is having a conversation with a close companion, drawing the reader into a recollection of climbing to the top of a ski hill and imagining being a doctor. The idea and organization are straightforward and a pattern emerges: a situation is explained, imagining occurs, and inspiration results. Occasionally, the student chooses words and structures sentences for effect in an attempt to establish a personal style. This personal response is representative of Satisfactory (3) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

The main idea is expressed through the recollection of an event that the student says "was the only time that my imagination had actually affected me to a large extent." The idea is developed routinely with appropriate detail: establishing the danger of the "ludicrous" climb and being viewed as "extreme idiots," experiencing awe at the top, where "only thoughts were of importance," imagining "my self as a doctor," and wanting to follow "this dream." There is strength in comparing the ridiculousness of the climb to being "arrested for breaking in to my own house." In the conclusion, the student connects this experience to the idea in the poem by using suitable quotations and depends upon the final lines of the poem to hint at an appreciation of the power and scope of imagination.

Writing Skills

The writing is clear despite occasional misuse of commas. Good choices in diction include "realm," "feats," "exotic," and "overwhelming." Others are more rudimentary: "I got arrested," "most beautiful thing," and "affected me to such a large extent." A few sentences begin with a subordinate clause; for example, "While this experience may not seem so overwhelming to you," and in other sentences "except" and "however" are used to show relationship. Many sentences are simple, which is sometimes effective—"I couldn't believe it." At other times, simple sentences are strung together by comma splices; for example, "Then came some magical experience, like some strange aparition, thoughts began flowing into my mind." Spelling and apostrophe use are generally controlled, despite "aparition," "my self," and "Yeat's." The writing has occasional grammatical errors, such as the wrong verb in "So naturally, I gave in to my first thought, I lied down and closed my eyes." The conversational tone effectively establishes intimacy.

Now You Know Why I Wanna be an M.D.

I remember, that time four years ago, when we went skiing. We walked up that hill for over an hour. And all you could talk about was how a year ago there had been an avalanche in that same area. It was the most ludicrous thing I had ever been involved in, except for that time I got arrested for breaking in to my own house. Everyone below us kept looking up like we were some kind of extreme idiots. Then finally, we got to the top, it was so high there weren't even any trees, but it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

There was absolutely no noise up there, not even a gust of wind. It felt like we had enter someone else's realm, where only thoughts were of importance. So naturally, I gave in to my first thought. I lied down and closed my eyes. Then came some magical experience, like some strange aparition, thoughts began flowing into my mind. This was impossible, my imagination had taken over every piece of logic I had.

Finally I saw my self as a doctor. I couldn't believe it. Most people have fantasies about amazing feats or exotic places or even exotic people. I just imagined my self as a doctor. The strange thing, was, however, that I was happier at that point than I could remember being in quite some time. While this experience may not seem so overwhelming to you, it was the only time that my imagination had actually affected me to a large extent.

While you still may not understand why I want so much to become a doctor, there the only explanation I have. It's like that poem by W.B. Yeats this dream ran through my mind and "called one by my name." I know in my heart that if I can again find this dream I will be able to "pluck till times are done the silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun."

STUDENT SAMPLE 3A (Major Assignment Exemplar)

General Comments

This composition focuses on the effect of imagination on Chris in "Horses of the Night" and presents the idea that "When imagination gets to the point of ruling over reality it has a definite negative effect." This idea is supported by general details, which include the horses, the different jobs, and the war, as they occur chronologically in the story. The controlling idea is repeated in the conclusion. Word choice and sentence structures are rudimentary, and although some errors in mechanics and grammar are made, meaning is clear. This response was selected during standards confirmation to be presented to group leaders and to markers as an example of writing representative of Satisfactory (3) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

"Horses of the Night" is a good choice of literature for this topic. The response reveals a rather literal interpretation of the story. Appropriate details support what is a typical unifying idea—imagination may influence an individual in a negative manner—and follow the plot of the story to achieve unity and coherence. This practical approach yields a clear and adequate discussion of the events of the story presented in a neutral tone.

Thought and Detail

The thesis "When imagination gets to the point of ruling over reality it has a definite negative effect" is appropriate and is supported by appropriate details. The student mentions Chris and Grandfather, noting that "nothing his Grandfather said bothered him"; the horses, described as "two gorgeous horses he had"; the jobs, noting that "every time he came back he had a different job"; and the war, stating "Chris was sent to fight in World War II." The student's recognition of Vanessa's viewpoint and changed perception is insightful—"Vanessa believed everything that Chris told her" and "Vanessa knew then that what she thought was high spirits was a pretend world." The student is aware of what happens in the story and acknowledges that "all Chris had ever lived in was his own little fantasy world."

Organization

The introduction and conclusion are functional. A focus is stated at the end of the introduction and is mechanically maintained. Development is almost completely dependent upon the chronological order of the literature chosen. Each body paragraph concludes with an interpretation of details given, and the following paragraph begins with the next event in the story. For example, the third paragraph concludes with an assessment of Vanessa and Chris, followed by what happened next—"When Chris had finished high school"—at the beginning of the subsequent paragraph. The student's use of transitions shows relationships between ideas; for example, "Finally he went back to Shallow Creek," "Despite everything she saw there," and "Vanessa

¶ An example of a story where someone had a definate influence from their imagination was in Horses In The Night.

In this story Chris lived and through on his imagination. He did this because he did not like what was happening around him, so he imagined that life was better than it really was without knowing it. Chris let his imagination control his life. When imagination gets to the point of ruling over reality it has a definite negative effect.

Horses In The Night is set in the 1930's, or better known as the "dirty thirties", and the war has just started. Families are having problems surviving on what they have. Chris has been sent to live with his grandparent, so that he can finish high school. When Chris met his grandfather, who is a rather forward and to the point person, nothing his Grandfather said bothered him. Chris acted as though he never heard one word his grandfather said.

Chris had a lot of big dreams about the future and the present, but, unfortunately, the dreams about the present were just his imagination. He told Vanessa, his cousin, all about his home in Shallow Creek, about how beautiful everything was. Chris also told her about the two gorgeous horses he had, and how that if he worked with them, they could be race horses, if he wanted. Vanessa believed everything that Chris told her, but the sad part is that Chris had believed his self.

When Chris had finished high school he was supposed to go home to Shallow Creek, but instead he just left. Chris did return to visit Vanessa and her family, and every time he came

knew then." The conclusion includes both a restatement of the thesis and the introduction of a new idea—the potential positive effect of imagination. The discussion is ordered and meaning is clear.

Matters of Choice

Conscious choices are occasionally made to achieve a particular purpose. For example, "Chris lived on and through his imagination" is made more effective as a result of editing, and "Vanessa knew then that what she thought was high spirits was a pretend world" is an attempt to show relationship between ideas. Although diction is usually very general, some choices are effective: families have problems "surviving," and Vanessa "admired" Chris. Other choices are imprecise: "a lot of big dreams," "pretend world," and "hassels of everyday life." Syntax is generally straightforward but is occasionally awkward, as in this sentence: "When Chris saw his grandfather, who is a rather forward and to the point person, nothing his Grandfather said bothered him." In this sentence, the use of the phrase "to the point" as an adjective suggests uncertainty of vocabulary choice. There is some evidence of sentence variety, and the writing is reasonably fluent.

Matters of Convention

This writing has occasional errors in spelling, such as "definate," "unfortuneately," and "hassels"; in punctuation, such as "Despite everything she saw there she still admired Chris for, what she thought to be high spirits"; and in usage, such as "but the sad part is that Chris had believed his self." Errors in grammatical agreement are also present. The student does spell "definite" correctly later in the essay and writes "a lot" as two separate words. The apostrophe is correctly used in "one's" and comma use is usually accurate, as in the appositive "He told Vanessa, his cousin, all about his home."

back he had a different job. Finally ~~there~~ he went back to Shallow Creek to help his family with the farm. Vanessa went to visit him one summer vacation, and saw how everything was. She saw that Shallow Creek was just a "dust bowl", and that the two race horses were really two old run down horses, that looked like they were bought from a glue factory. Despite everything she saw there she still admired Chris for, what she thought to be high spirits.

TP Years later the time came when Chris was sent to fight in World War II. He was forced to face reality, so you think, but he still hid in his world. In one of the letter he wrote Vanessa, he wrote something to the effect that they only thought that he was fighting and killing all of those men, but it was not him at all. Vanessa knew then that what she thought was high spirits was a pretend world, and that all Chris had ever lived in was his own little fantasy world. Chris had gone insane and was sent to a mental hospital.

To a certain extent imagination can have a positive effect on an individuals life & because it helps them & get away from the hassels of everyday life. Imagination can have a negative effect on one's life, if it is taken too far. As ~~what was said earlier also~~ long as imagination does not rule over reality, it is safe.

STUDENT SAMPLE 3B (Major Assignment)

General Comments

Death of a Salesman is a suitable choice of literature for this topic. The response suggests that Willy Loman has been tragically affected by his imagination because of his weak character and constant "flashbacks" to the past to avoid reality. The student equates imagination with Willy's dream—"This was his ideal and this was what he built his life on, this dream"—and with living in the past and talking "to the people he sees in his own mind." The discussion is fairly thorough, touching on important details, and is occasionally insightful. The expression is generally clear and confident. This response is representative of Satisfactory (3) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

Death of a Salesman is interpreted in a general manner. The composition makes reference to Willy's weak character and various flashbacks to develop the unifying purpose, which is to "demonstrate the effect the imagination had on the main character." The development of this idea is sustained throughout with sufficient and appropriate details. The elements "character" and "flashback" seem to be imposed upon the student's idea, resulting in some loss of coherence when the student deals simultaneously with Willy's flashback and the characters of Biff and Ben.

Thought and Detail

This response contains some specific details from the play to show that imagination "leads to the ultimate destruction of Willy Loman." Most of the literary interpretations are correct. Although the student's contention that Willy "considered himself to be an average man" is questionable, most readers would agree that Willy did have a confused notion of the value of a man who could "work with his hands" and believed that "a man needed two qualities to be successful: good looks and popularity." Appropriate details are given to show how Willy's "weakness" in character led to his tragic end; for example, he was not "succesaful in his job," he "would not change jobs because it was his dream to be a great salesman," and "he even had an ideal death" in mind. The compositon also contains several examples of flashback to show how this form of imagination led to Willy's "ultimate destruction": "he tells his wife Linda that he makes lots of sales on one trip," "All Willy can see is when Biff was young," "He thinks of the time when he could have gone with Ben to the jungle," and "He even uses Ben to convince himself that Biff will be thankful for Willy committing suicide." The statements "In his imagination he even had an ideal death," and "He uses Ben to be an image of what he wants to be like but does not approach it realistically, realizing that his personality is not the same as Ben's is" contain evidence that the student has some insight into the character of Willy Loman and into the theme of the play.

The imagination has a strong influence on many people's lives. It has the power to either motive or hinder a person's progress in life. In the play Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, the playwright uses characters and ~~the~~ flashbacks to demonstrate the effect the imagination had on the main character Willy Loman's life.

Willy Loman considered himself to be an average man. He had two kids grown up, a wife and a job he hated but kept because he thought a man did not work with his hands. He thought that a man needed two qualities to be successful: good looks and popularity. It was this weakness in his character that did not allow him to be successful in his job. He could neither get satisfaction or enough money to support his family from his job. He had to borrow from his neighbor Charlie to make ends meet. Yet Willy Loman would not change jobs because it was his dream to be a great salesman. He dreamt that he could travel from town to town where could make lots of money and know a lot of people. In his imagination he even had an ideal death where he would die and people would come from all over the country and pay respects for him saying that he was a great guy, a great salesman ~~and~~ and that he was the best. He lived in glory. This was his ideal and this was what he built his life on, this was ~~his~~ ~~dream, but it did not come out~~ this dream.

Organization

The composition is built around an idea adopted from the preamble. The controlling idea presented in the introductory paragraph is maintained through details that show how imagination weakens Willy's character. Although there is some confusion in the understanding and/or presentation of flashbacks—sometimes intended as a technique, often presented as a detail—further negative manifestations of imagination are shown. It is not clear whether there should be a new paragraph after discussing Willy and Biff and before considering Willy and Ben. A new paragraph here would be appropriate; elsewhere, paragraphing is well done and each contains topic and concluding sentences. Transitions include "This" and "Another." The conclusion is functionally related to the essay; the general idea in the thesis statement is repeated and there is an attempt in the last sentence to generalize. The student states that Willy's imagination had three manifestations: a wrong dream that Willy pursued stubbornly, a tendency for Willy to drop into the past whenever reality was too difficult to handle, and Willy's ability to believe that he was talking to people from the past as though they were actually present. Instead of organizing the composition in this manner, the student imposes "character" and "flashback" on the thesis as a way of development, at times limiting smooth and effective expression of ideas.

Matters of Choice

The writing is straightforward and attempts are made to use sentence structure for effect. Effective word choices include "hinder," "calculating," and "ultimate," although generalized wording is present in other choices: "two kids grown up," "makes lots of money," and "things that are hard for him." Examples of effective sentence structuring are "He thought that a man needed two qualities to be successful: good looks and popularity," which employs a colon effectively; "However when she takes out paper and starts calculating," which begins with subordination; and "The truth is he does not make enough sales," which is a short sentence used for effect. Occasionally, errors in syntax detract from the expression of insightful thought: "In his imagination he even had an ideal death where he would die and people would come from all over the country and pay respects for him saying that he was a great guy, a great salesman and that he was the best." There are also some sentence fragments, but overall the writing is clear.

Throughout the play flashbacks occur whenever Willy Loman needs to escape from reality. We often see Willy using his imagination to make things that are hard for him to accept easier. One occurance is where he tells his wife Linda that he makes lots of sales on one trip. However when she takes out paper and starts calculating he makes excuses for himself like that day the people were not there to see him or he did not have enough time. The truth is he doesn't make enough sales. He has to borrow from his neighbor to get enough money. He ignores the problems he face. Like with his son Biff who is now working on a ranch to make money. All Willy can see is when Biff was young, when Biff was a popular football quarterback who could have earned a scholarship if he only passed math. He refuses to see Biff for what he is in the present and this destroys their relationship which makes it even harder for Willy to accept. ~~He talks to himself as if he is speaking~~ Willy talks to the people he sees in his own mind, as if the people are really there in front of him. He does not realize that the people are not real. We see that whenever Willy is unsatified he pretends. Another occurance is with his brother Ben. We see that in the present Willy is unsatisfied with his job. He does not do anything

Matters of Convention

The composition has few spelling errors, and despite the occasional missing comma, punctuation is generally correct. There is vague pronoun reference in the sentence "In his mind Ben is encouraging him, talking to him telling him that it is ok for him to do it," in which the student attempts parallel structure. Errors do not, however, indicate lack of control.

to change this, instead he thinks of what could have been for him. He thinks of the time that he could have gone with Ben to the jungle and strike it rich. He uses Ben to be an image of what he wants to be like but does not approach it realistically, realizing that his personality is not the same as Ben's is. He uses Ben to convince himself that Biff will be thankful for Willy committing suicide. In his mind Ben is encouraging him, talking to him telling him to go for it that it is ok. for him to do it. This leads to the ultimate destruction of Willy Loman. It leads to his tragic death. One that his imagination led him to believe would bring respect from his son Biff.

In the play Death of a Salesman Arthur Miller demonstrates the influence of one's imagination in one's life. We are able to see the effects the imagination has on the characters. We are able to see it. We are absorbable to see how it can influence one when making important decisions in one's life.

STUDENT SAMPLE 3C (Major Assignment)

General Comments

This composition presents the main character, Miss Brill, as one who uses imagination to escape the reality of her lonely life. The response presents a sympathetic understanding of Miss Brill as a character. Appropriate, generalized information is given in this short essay to support the interpretation of the story. This response is representative of Satisfactory (3) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

"Miss Brill" is a suitable literary selection for this topic. The student has generated an original thesis on which to build the essay and has supported it with appropriate details. Because Miss Brill lives in imagination and faces an abrupt awakening at the end of the story, it is appropriate to follow the plot, as this composition does, in order to show the effect that imagination has on the character. Comments on the action, however, are infrequent, and many of the potentially interesting ideas require expansion. The writing is clear, unified, and coherent in presenting the story's facts.

Thought and Detail

The unifying idea—"If someone feels that they don't belong, they can escape from the reality"—is suitable for the story "Miss Brill" and for the topic. Miss Brill is presented as an outsider who uses her imagination to escape reality. General details to support this idea include Miss Brill's "listening in on other peoples conversations," "pretending that they all have a part in a play," building up a "dream world," preparing to "listen in" on the young lovers, and then being "hurt" by what she hears and hurrying home to cry "because her dream world fell apart." The attempt to replicate dialogue lends a degree of vitality to the writing. Although the first mention of the fur as a symbol needs clarification, it is subsequently used with some insight in "it is out of place" and in the comparison between the fur and the box, and Miss Brill and the room. The discussion concludes with the maxim that "something will bring you back to reality . . . ." Literary interpretations are generally defensible.

In the short story 'Miss Brill' Katherine Mansfield shows us what imagination does for people who don't fit in society. If someone feels that they don't belong, they can escape from the reality.

Throughout the story Mansfield shows what a person does to escape the hurt of reality.

Miss Brill is an old lady living in a French community, but she is English. She teaches English to French students, and she reads a newspaper to an old gentleman. On Sunday afternoon she puts on her fur and goes out to the park. She listens to the music being played by the band and listens in on other peoples conversations. She watches everyone in the park and pretends that they all have a part in a play, she likes to think they are all on stage. She sees the other elder people in the park and thinks that they look like they come from little cupboards or little rooms. She is really thinking of what she lives like. The fur that she wears symbolizes her society on her youth. Normally old ladies don't wear fur, young women would. While Miss Brill sits in the park she builds up a dream world to escape from her real life. She doesn't belong there but makes believe she does.

When the two young lovers come and sit on the bench, Miss Brill prepares to listen in on their lives. They know she is listening to them, the

Organization

The introduction gives general direction for the development of the composition by establishing Miss Brill as someone who doesn't "fit in society" and therefore uses her imagination to "escape from the reality." This idea is developed by chronologically citing generalized detail from the story to show Miss Brill's use of imagination to escape. The conclusion reiterates "that a person can escape reality" and adds, somewhat moralistically, "something will bring you back to reality whether youre expecting it or not!" Coherence falters somewhat with the first mention of the fur as symbol. Few transitions can be found among the details, and it is not clear when the student is beginning a new paragraph.

Matters of Choice

The composition has a confident, matter-of-fact tone throughout. Effective word choices are occasionally made, such as "gentleman" and "pretends," but many are unusual and, perhaps, colloquial, such as "the hurt of reality," and "builds up a dream world." Although many sentences are written in subject-verb-object order, "but" is used for contrast in compound sentences, and "While Miss Brill sits in the park she builds up a dream world to escape from her real life" illustrates use of subordination. Attempts at more complex sentences sometimes falter. The writing is, however, generally clear.

Matters of Convention

The compostion contains few spelling mistakes; however, few difficult or complex words are used. "Peoples" and "youre" require apostrophes, and there is some confusion in the use of quotation marks. Despite occasional comma splice errors, and lack of agreement, as in "if someone sees that they don't belong," the writing demonstrates control of conventions.

boy asks 'why, because of that old thing at the end there?' 'why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home' Miss Brill hears this and realizes that she is not wanted, she is brought back to reality and her dream world starts to crumble. She is hurt by this and goes straight to her room, she doesn't stop at the bakery for a treat. When she gets to her room, she takes off her fur and puts it away in its box. The fur also symbolizes the way she lives, it is out of place, rich and young people wear [redacted] fur she is old and gets by. The fur is kept in a box, like she stays in a small room. When she gets in her room her reality comes back, she only escapes it for a while. When she puts her fur back and thinks she heard something crying, she is crying because her dream world fell apart. She knows she doesn't belong and she doesn't like to feel the reality so she escaped it through her imagination. Katherine Mansfield is [redacted] saying that a person can escape reality for a time but something will bring you back to [redacted] reality whether you're expecting it or not.

SUMMARY OF SATISFACTORY (3) WRITING

Achieving Satisfactory (3) is an accomplishment for some students and a starting point for others. One purpose of this booklet is to describe the features of acceptable writing in terms of thoughtfulness, effectiveness, and correctness, in an effort to help motivate students to improve their writing with help from their teachers. With this objective in mind, some common observations drawn from samples of Satisfactory (3) writing follow. We hope the patterns and processes outlined will be instructive for both students and teachers.

Thoughtfulness

At the Satisfactory (3) level, students are able to identify what is expected of them and deliver it routinely in both assignments. In the minor assignment, an appropriate personal experience or observation is explained and related to the literary prompt. Support is often matter-of-fact. In the major assignment, the controlling idea is also often derived from details in the preamble, resulting in a predictable and broad thesis. Discussion of this thesis is based on a literal understanding of the chosen literature, a partial consideration of the chosen literature, or a "black-and-white" perception of the chosen literature. Consequently, while good choices of literature are made, writing at the Satisfactory (3) level often falls short of illustrating a complete and insightful understanding of the chosen literature. Development of idea and use of detail show a more confident knowledge of plot than of theme. The quality and quantity of detail are sufficient in that details are usually accurate but frequently scant or oversimplified. Sometimes the student uses a concept rather than a detail as support. Writing at this level often demonstrates an unclear understanding of the distinction between the general and the specific or of the need to elaborate or explain fully. Overall, Satisfactory (3) writing illustrates a tendency to summarize rather than analyse or synthesize ideas.

Effectiveness

Responses to both the minor and major assignments are organized in a straightforward manner and are typically short and to the point. Statements from the preamble are often used, with varying degrees of effectiveness, to formulate a unifying idea that directs the shape of the composition. Responses to the minor assignment chronologically explain the personal experience chosen, and the central idea is restated in the conclusion. Reponses to the major assignment often depend for coherent development upon plot or the imposition of elements on a broad thesis, and also conclude with a restatement of the central idea. Coherence occasionally falters, perhaps because students writing at the Satisfactory (3) level tend to concentrate on the details that are being immediately handled and periodically lose sight of the overall picture. Transitions are mechanical. Sometimes, effective word choices are made and complex structures attempted. Usually, however, diction is general and simple sentences are direct and clear. Students may lack the skills or confidence to use precise vocabulary and complex constructions, to restructure sentences for effect, or to sustain effective presentation of ideas and details in an examination situation. On the whole, writing at this level is clear and has a sincere and confident tone.

Correctness

Writing at the Satisfactory (3) level illustrates correctness of content, a predictable understanding of the topic, and an acceptable but narrow interpretation of literature. The details are generally accurate but sketchy. The writing has few spelling or capitalization errors, and punctuation is most often correct. Errors in grammar, such as nonagreement of subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent, are occasionally present, but conventions are generally controlled.

Writing described by Satisfactory (3) descriptors demonstrates an acceptable standard of diploma examination (first draft) writing for students completing English 30. It consists of conventional ideas and defensible literary interpretations, and is functionally organized with few errors in mechanics and grammar. In many instances, writing at this level demonstrates considerable potential.

SECTION THREE
SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING AT THE EXCELLENT (5) LEVEL

GENERAL COMMENTS

Writing that earns Excellent (5) on the English 30 Diploma Examination represents a standard of excellence for students graduating from the high school academic stream. As in the other levels, there is a range within the Excellent (5) category. Many of these compositions, which are essentially first-draft writing, deserve respect and inspire awe. Following are some of the common characteristics of writing within the range indicated by the descriptors at the Excellent (5) level of the scoring guide (see Appendix B).

Minor Assignment: Personal Response to Literature

Thought and Detail: The responses have an insightful and/or complex unifying idea. The ideas generated result in interesting and sometimes lively responses that are thoughtful, creative, and often profound. The writing displays confidence in ideas, organization, and choice of language. Very specific, apt detail brings the writing alive. Responses at the Excellent (5) level conclude strongly, but often subtly, by extending the controlling idea. Sometimes an insight from personal experience is detailed; sometimes a mature understanding of the significance of the topic in the greater scope of human experience is offered.

Writing Skills: These responses are characterized by an effective and impressive command of language and technique. Ideas are presented so effectively that they demand respect and often carry the reader past any awareness of incidental errors. The writing is usually in the present tense, skilfully structured, and fluent. Diction is mature, exact, and stimulating. Metaphor, parallelism, repetition for effect, connotative language, and original turns of phrase are used as a matter of course. Sentence variety is achieved smoothly and naturally. Punctuation is controlled and effective; spelling and grammar are often flawless.

Major Assignment: Literature Composition

Total Impression: Writing at the Excellent (5) level deserves respect because of perceptive ideas, carefully chosen details, complex yet clear organization, and effective expression. Students choose appropriate literature and formulate interesting theses that are fully and carefully developed. The writing is confident, fresh, and often compelling to read.

Thought and Detail: Writing at the Excellent (5) level demonstrates a perceptive understanding of literature. The writing shows sensitivity to character and an implicit understanding of theme. The controlling idea seems to be inspired by the topic and the literature chosen, and is developed consistently, confidently, and thoroughly with accurate, well chosen, and specific detail. Quotations from the

chosen literature are apt. The content engages and stimulates the reader. Sometimes details are linked in a manner that creates, for the reader, a new perspective on very familiar literature. The writing demonstrates that these students not only understand literature perceptively, but also appreciate the author's style and are able to comment upon that style explicitly or implicitly.

Organization: The organization of Excellent (5) writing is characterized by subtle complexity. Because the writing has clarity and the ideas and details are perceptive, the innovative and complex structure of the essay can appear deceivingly simple. What might appear to be a straightforward plot outline may in fact be a thoughtful handling of a character's development—a presentation sensitive to the author's style and one that comments on character throughout. Other forms of organization sustain contrasts or parallel ideas or draw relationships between ideas both within paragraphs and among paragraphs in the composition. Such tight, overall planning acts as a blueprint for writing that never loses its focus. The writing generally begins with a personal focus based on the topic—a controlling general insight—and then condenses this idea to an incisive thesis statement. Each paragraph develops the idea with precise and insightful detail, and the writing concludes thoughtfully. Rarely does anything seem extraneous or distorted to fit into a formula. The writing flows from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, beginning to end.

Matters of Choice: The clear, polished writing at the Excellent (5) level demonstrates that students achieving this level have the ability to use language to enhance thought. Vocabulary is mature and words are chosen for accuracy. Sentence structures are complex and varied; there is fluency in the writing and usually an effective conciseness. Parallel structure and effective repetition are used as continual reinforcement of the controlling idea; in fact, parallelism of word, phrase, and idea is often masterful. Contrast, analogy, and metaphor are effectively employed. The present tense is used throughout, and an awareness of audience is demonstrated in this carefully crafted, confident, and convincing writing.

Matters of Convention: Writing at the Excellent (5) level displays few, if any, errors in spite of the complex structures and sophisticated expression. Colons, semicolons, brackets, and the dash, for example, are used for effect smoothly and naturally. Difficult words are spelled correctly and usage is generally flawless.

Examples of writing earning Excellent (5) from the June 1991 English 30 Diploma Examination follow. These examples demonstrate the perceptive, fluent, and polished writing characteristic of this level. In order to facilitate demonstration of the characteristics of writing at the two levels of achievement, sample essays chosen at the Excellent (5) level also discuss "Miss Brill," "Horses of the Night," and *Death of a Salesman*.

STUDENT SAMPLE 5A (Minor Assignment Exemplar)

General Comments

This carefully considered personal response provides insights into the importance of imagination. The strength of the writing lies in the development of the unifying idea, which contrasts the playful, colorful imagination of the individual child with the broader and more varied contribution of imagination to society as a whole. The writing is lively, has a confident voice, and is free from error. This personal response was selected during standards confirmation to be presented to group leaders and to markers as an example of writing representative of Excellent (5) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

The quotation is used as a springboard to the unifying idea, "Although I have not personally seen a trout turn into a maid, nor caught a fish for that matter, my imagination too can run wild." The unifying idea, that imagination allows for the impossible and makes life more interesting, is sustained throughout the response without being repetitive. Details are lively and imaginative: "I was a Russian spy and could not leave my name on a test" and "I have kept a lid on outbursts of my imagination." Insight is shown in "I find it refreshing to let go of the logic of my math and science classes and think the impossible," an idea which is picked up in the conclusion: "In a world that is becoming increasingly scientific and technical, imaginativeness is like a candle in the dark." The conclusion also illustrates a perceptive appreciation of the broader value of imagination for mankind: "Hail to the writers and poets and playwrights and artists who have used their creativity and imagination to provide a source of enjoyment known as the arts."

My imagination is what keeps me waking up every morning. It makes my somewhat dreary day at school more of an adventure. William Butler Yeats' poem "The Song of Wandering Aengus" has a quote which really hits me - "I had become a glimmering girl with apple blossom in her hair who called me by my name and ran And faded through the brightening air." The subject of the poem has let his imagination run wild when a trout becomes a girl on his floor.

Although I have not personally seen a trout turn into a maid, nor caught a fish for that matter, my imagination too can run wild. I find it refreshing to let go of the logic of my math and science classes and think the impossible. It exercises my brain to ponder what doesn't exist in my world. I wouldn't be a very interesting person if I lived my days seeing and doing only what was actually there.

As a child I may have caused my mother some worry due to my vivid imagination. I was a good dozen years younger than any other kids in my neighborhood, so I made up my own friends. I pretended to be characters in books or from television programs I had watched. My best friend was my dog "Blue". My little adventures in the backyard with costumes and toys may have been the reason my older brother and sister had few school mates over to the house. I think that if I didn't have those imaginations to stimulate me, childhood would have been a lonely and sad time.

Writing Skills

Specific, effective diction includes the use of precise vocabulary such as "dreary," "refreshing," "ponder," "dismay," and phrases like "capacity to imagine" and "Hail to the writers." Use of figurative language is illustrated in "like a candle in the dark" and subtle humor can be found periodically as in "Although I have not personally seen a trout turn into a maid," and "the reason my older brother and sister had few school mates over". Sentence variety used for effect is apparent. Especially effective is the juxtaposition of formal diction and syntax with informal, even colloquial, diction and syntax, such as "I have kept a lid on outbursts of my imagination." This suggests a control, fluency, and confidence in the use of language. Occasional awkwardness of phrasing does not detract from the effectiveness of this response, which is free from spelling errors.

Once school began and I had real friends my own age, my make-believe friends and thoughts disappeared. much to my teacher's dismay, they didn't disappear completely. In grade one, I had tried to convince my teacher that I was a Russian spy and could not leave my name on a test as I would be discovered. She didn't go for my story but I'm sure [redacted] she hasn't forgotten it.

I have kept a lid on outbursts of my imagination now that I'm nearing the end of my senior year of high school. I hear that the "real world" outside of my quiet town and the comfort of my parents' home is a tough place. Places like the hospital at Ponoka have been established to supervise those who may have lost control of their imagination. Although I do not plan on checking in to Ponoka (although the white gowns are quite fashionable) but I won't stop thinking and sometimes experiencing the impossible. It keeps the people around me on their feet and makes life "jolly". God gave us the capacity to imagine and I highly believe that skill should not be constrained.

Hail to the writers and poets and playwrights and artists who have used their creativity and imagination to provide a source of enjoyment known as the arts. The imagination is truly great, and mankind has been blessed to be able to use it. In a world that is becoming increasingly scientific and technical, imagination is like a candle in the dark.

STUDENT SAMPLE 5B (Minor Assignment)

General Comments

This response takes a more serious, philosophical view of imagination, implicitly illustrating a mature understanding of the topic as represented by Yeats' poem. The response suggests that imagination provides an escape to personal creativity and can also be used to inspire or ignite "the imaginations of others." Sentences are often structured for effect, and the writing is fluent and relatively free from errors. This personal response is representative of Excellent (5) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

A focused introduction demonstrates an insightful and perceptive understanding of the topic. The unifying idea is personalized, as seen in "I enjoy reading and playing games—fuel for the fire of my imagination," and is sustained throughout the composition: "fuel from the hazel woods" describes the personal effect of imagination, and "taken to the hazel wood of my friends" shows how imagination affects others. Thoughtfully selected support, such as "channel all of my imagination into the weaving of the tale," "step into the guise of a character," and "inspired my friend to create a game," vitalizes this insightful response. The writing concludes with a paraphrase of two lines from William Blake's poem "The Tiger," subtly suggesting the boundlessness of imagination.

Writing Skills

In this fluent response, the student unpretentiously uses complex vocabulary and mature diction; for example, "escapism," "ignited," "absolving," "channel," "guise," "waivers," "harrowing," and "cerebellums." Sentences are controlled, varied, and purposefully structured for effect, as in "I enjoy reading and playing games—fuel for the fire of my imagination—and I use escapism of this sort often", and "Perhaps a safari in the jungles of Africa today?" as well as the thoughtful "In time." The composition is virtually free from error and displays a strong, confident voice.

Imaginative Influences

Imagination is a strong factor of influence for me, and is best described by this quotation from William Butler Yeats' poem, The Song of Wandering Aengus:

"I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head."

I enjoy reading and playing games - fuel for the fire of my imagination - and I use escapism of this sort often. I have also ignited the imaginations of others, through inspiring action and thought.

I have a very good imagination, but I do require something to use it on, whether it be a book, game, computer program, or song. Without fuel of this sort, the "fire" in my head would soon die. For example, I am currently reading a very absorbing book by Tad Williams. It is the second in the series. With this medium, I can channel all of my imagination into the weaving of the tale.

Since it is a fantasy, I can see what the characters see, smell the fragrances they smell, and in general, live the story. This requires quite a good deal of imagination. Also, when I play a role-playing game, I step into the guise of a character I create, similar to how an actor acts. With imagination the world suddenly shifts, wavers and turns into whatever I wish it to. Perhaps a safari in the jungles of Africa today? A harrowing search for an artifact, like the sword Excalibur? With the right fuel from the hazel woods, my imagination can perform wonders.

Next, I have also slighted the imaginations of others. I enjoy writing (although I use a computer, to be legible) and am constantly writing stories. My ideas, captured from imaginings and dropped on paper, have sometimes been taken to the hazel wood of my friends giving them my imaginings, placing them in their cerebellums to be enjoyed. The fire burning brightly inside of me compelled me to share it with

others. For example, a short story I constructed a while ago about the adventures of the protagonist Flame inspired my friend to create a game based on my story. I'm positive that if my work is ever published, that I can set a fire the imaginations of hundreds. In time.

Imagination, for me, is escapism. I enjoy the books I read, the games I play, and the stories I write for this reason. Imagination, burning bright, where will you take me tonight? - Depends upon the fuel I use.

STUDENT SAMPLE 5C (Minor Assignment)

General Comments

The response begins somewhat formally, presenting a thoughtful consideration of the value of imagination in coping with practical realities, and then skilfully leads the reader through a fantasy that is really an imaginative way of describing a week-end chore. An implicit understanding of the topic is shown in this perceptive and lively composition. This response is representative of Excellent (5) in both reporting categories.

Thought and Detail

The response describes imagination as "a place where we may lead a life such as that which we desire" and then draws the reader into a very descriptive "battle" to illustrate the idea. Carefully considered, precise details include "Saturday morning, the sun shining through the window," "the memory came crashing down on me like so much rock," "I pulled on my gauntlets, the smell of leather arising," "sharpen its great blade," "using rocks and bones to hurl in my path," "my foe lies vanquished in a pile," and "the evil will return again, and again I must fight." The thoroughly sustained and very creative comparison between doing battle as a knight errant and mowing the lawn is refreshing and imaginative. Further insight is shown in the conclusion with the statement, "I wonder at the idiocy of man, that he wishes to defeat the unbeatable" as the student leaves the "hazel wood." Like grass, imagination to this student is an ever-replenishing, natural force.

Writing Skills

Word choices are made deliberately to effectively evoke the atmosphere of the Age of Chivalry. Effective diction includes "master," "quiver," "gauntlets," "debris," "vanquished," and "bane." Phrasing is skilful, as in "held a promise for a very comfortable day," "my master would still make me go forth and fight," " arose and broke my fast," "light and soft leather to give me speed and agility," and "wonder at the idiocy of man." The writing reveals an ability to handle complex structures impressively in spite of an occasional comma splice. Parallel wording has been used for effect in "the evil will return again, and again I must fight." Spelling is error free, sentence variety is evident, and the student shows confidence in the use of complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

"I went out to the bright world
Because a fire was in my head"—

We must constantly deal with things or people in life, which we would rather ignore so we can move on to other tasks. But rarely can we ever escape the reality of straight, practical lives which we lead, and we must find some way to cope. Imagination is the ability to create in the mind images and actions which are not real, even to the point of creating a new reality. It is a place where we may lead a life such as that which we desire.

Everybody imagines things at some time or another, in fact I do it all the time. An experience where this happened was as follows.

I awoke with the feeling of pure luxury one Saturday morning, the sun shining through the window held a promise for a very comfortable day and I was ready to take it all for pure

enjoyment. As I began to move sluggishly in bed the memory came crashing down on me like so much rock that it shocked me. Today I was to go forth and battle!!! Instantly my mouth went dry and my legs began to quiver. I thought about the wisdom in staying in bed but my master would still make me go forth and fight.

Resigned to my fate I arose and broke my fast, then grumbling I went to prepare myself. Armour is very important so with great care I pulled on my gauntlets, the smell of leather arising as I strapped them on. Then the footwear, light and soft leather to give me speed and agility. And finally the visor to protect my eyes from debris. And now with my equipment, in addition to clothes of course, I went to see to my weapon.

My weapon is necessary to keep me going, yet I hate it, and all it stands for. In preparation I

sharpen its great blade, honing every stroke of the sharpening stone, until finally it is ready and I go forth to fight.

The battle is long and tiring, I cut and slash, while my enemy uses every trick it possess, even using rocks + bones to hinder my path. When finally it is over and my foe lies vanquished in a pile. But I know I have not won, the evil will return again, and again I must fight. As I stand and look about me I cannot wait until we move to town and are rid of these acres of grass. The lawnmower is the bane of my existence, so as I remove my sunglasses and trudge to the house I wonder at the idiocy of man, that he wishes to defeat the embeetobb. And now I have left my bagel wood and must return to reality. What would I do if I could not block out reality while I deal with it?

STUDENT SAMPLE 5A (Major Assignment Exemplar)

General Comments

The story "Miss Brill" is a suitable choice for the topic of imagination. This composition not only presents the story insightfully, but also reveals a mature understanding of the underlying irony and poignancy, both explicitly through careful analysis and more subtly through tone. The writing is fluent and virtually error free. This response was selected during standards confirmation to be presented to group leaders and to markers as an example of writing representative of Excellent (5) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

This essay deserves respect for its conscientiousness of detail, for its clarity in structure and style, and for its obvious conviction. The writing not only demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the story, but also reveals a sensitivity to Mansfield's tone.

Thought and Detail

The composition suggests that human imagination is "powerful" in its effects and then more specifically suggests that imagination allows people to escape from "bleakness and isolation," making their lives "more interesting" and "less lonely." Imagination also allows people to feel "important," "content," and even "chipper." At the same time, the composition suggests, imaginative fantasies may be "fragile" and thus easily "shattered"—with the "devastat[ing]" effect of making life seem "more bleak and lonely than ever." The composition reveals a continuing awareness of the irony that serves as the basis for artistic tension in the story, repeatedly reminding the reader of Miss Brill's initial lack of awareness: "She does not ponder her own solitary life . . . that she is sitting there . . . alone," "it is not really herself that she compares, but the person she imagines herself to be," she does not identify with the "poor creatures", and "she is not getting rejected, like a woman in an ermine toque." The final irony is revealed through an understanding that while the fantasies initially make Miss Brill happy, once they are shattered "it seems even worse than it may have been had she not imagined all her fantasies." As impressive as the controlling idea is the thorough knowledge of the story and the carefully selected details that reinforce the ideas; for example, "Jardins Publiques," "enjoy the band," "fur—a wonderful little rogue . . . biting its tail," "conductor . . . wearing a new coat," "woman with a roll of knitting on her embroidered apron," and "girls . . . with a pair of soldiers." Such thoroughness is typical in each paragraph.

In "Miss Brill", a short story by Katherine Mansfield, Miss Brill uses an active imagination to create a fantasy world in which to live. She does this to escape from the bleakness and isolation of her real life, and in doing so, makes her life more interesting. She is content and even chipper in her fantasies, and imagines herself to be an important part of other people's lives. She also feels that she is more important, or has a better life than the other people around her. Yet once her fragile fantasy world is shattered, her life returns to the gloom of the reality in which she lives. When Miss Brill's fantasy world exists, she is content, and even thinks of herself as better than others, yet once her ~~world~~ world dissipates, she finds the world more bleak and lonely than ever.

Miss Brill is content with the ~~[illegible] that she believes herself to live~~ fantasy world in which she believes herself to live. Not recognizing that her life is wonderful only within her own mind, she is perfectly happy. She follows a delightful schedule, which includes going to the Jardins Publiques to enjoy the band and watch the other people in the park. On one particular day she is especially happy, because she has decided to wear her fur - a wonderful little rogue which rests on her shoulders, biting its tail. She sits

Organization

The introduction clearly focuses the reader on the topic and then establishes the order in which ideas will be developed: Miss Brill's escape into a "more interesting" world, her feeling of importance, and ultimately her feeling "more bleak and lonely than ever." A strong sense of paragraph unity is demonstrated by establishing clearly, at or near the beginning of each paragraph, its central point, and then developing that point with meticulously chosen illustration. The writing demonstrates an awareness of transitional devices as an aid to coherence. For example, repeating words such as "fantasy" and "world" in the introduction to link one idea with the next in the reader's mind, arranging to end a paragraph on a note that can be picked up at the beginning of the next paragraph, and using subordination at the beginning of sentences within paragraphs all provide subtle transition. The conclusion is related thoughtfully to the controlling idea and pulls together the key stages in Miss Brill's progression to illustrate "the powerful effects of the human imagination" and the confrontation with reality that "devastates" Miss Brill.

Matters of Choice

Diction in this composition is effective without being pretentious: "bleakness and isolation," "fragile fantasy," "dissipates," "solitary life," "beauty and splendor of the day," "avidly watching," "looks forward to the shock and delight," "abruptly forced to recognize," and "embellished." The sentences are controlled and varied. The writer seems to appreciate the effect of rhythms of language, knowing when to vary a sentence beginning, when to use a shorter sentence or a longer one, and where to place subordinate elements. The choices made appear to be effortless and carry the reader along both intellectually and emotionally. This clear, polished composition demonstrates confidence and conviction.

Matters of Convention

This response is essentially free from errors. The occasional misused comma or the use of "like" instead of "as" does not interfere with meaning.

on a bench in the park, and absorbs the surroundings, which are bright and pleasant. She notices everything around her; even that the conductor of the band is wearing a new coat. She sits near a fine old man in a velvet coat and a woman with a roll of knitting in her embroidered apron, and, disappointed that she cannot hear any conversation from them, happily recalls other conversations that she has heard. She watches as two young girls walk away with a pair of soldiers, and thinks of them. She does not ponder her own solitary life, or the fact that she is sitting there on the bench alone, but is happy and content to enjoy the beauty and splendor of the day.

While Miss Brill sits on the bench and observes the other people, she does think of herself in comparison to them. Yet it is not really herself that she compares, but the person she imagines herself to be. Thus, when she makes the comparison, she thinks that she is better than the people around her. She is not getting rejected, like the woman in an ermine toque is rejected by a gentleman in grey. Nor is she throwing away flowers that a young boy picked up for her, as she sees another woman do. In her opinion, Miss Brill sees herself as better

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She sees the other people in the park as merely dark shadows who looked like they came out of small cupboards. She thinks of herself as being much better than these poor creatures.

than these people. In fact, not only does she think of herself as superior to the other people in the park, but she also thinks that she is an intricate part of all this action that she is avidly watching. She views herself as an actress who is merely playing a role here in the park. This fantasy of hers not only allows her to see herself as an important part of the action, but also as a more important person in general. She is delighted with this new twist to her fantasy, and anticipates informing the elderly man that she reads to. She looks forward to the shock and delight that he will feel when he discovers that she is not just an ordinary teacher, but an actress who took time to read to him. This new fantasy thoroughly enthralls her. Her imagination races as she ponders all the new things that this insight to the importance of her life could mean.

Yet even in the excitement of the growth of her fantasy world, Miss Brill hears something which completely shatters her fantasy and changes her life. As she is sitting on the bench, a boy and girl come by and sit near her. The boy wishes to kiss the girl, but she girl insists that she cannot let him, because they are in public. Not only that, but she sees the poor creature

with the fur that looks like a fried whiting that is sitting on the bench. Miss Brill hears this, and realizing that these youngsters are speaking about her, is shattered. She leaves the park quickly, and hurries home. She does not even stop at the bakery to buy a piece of honeycake, which was normally part of her ~~unbreakable~~ routine. ~~Her~~ Rather, she hurries back to her room, which she now recognizes is more like a cupboard than a room. The world around her is no longer the ~~wonderful~~ bright place that it had been before. It is now the depressing and drab reality that Miss Brill is suddenly forced to recognize. Since she has been so abruptly forced to recognize this reality, it seems even worse than it may have been had she not imagined all her fantasies. She must now recognize that her only friend, the fur, is really shabby, and places it back in the box. Closing the box, she remains sitting on the bed, crying. Her fantasy has been shattered, and now the bleakness and loneliness of her life have fully been exposed to her, and Miss Brill is devastated.

In Katherine Mansfield's short story "Miss Brill", the powerful effects of the human imagination are focused on. At the onset of the story, Miss Brill is completely content with the life that she leads, because it has been embellished by her active imagination. This continues, and Miss Brill envisions herself as superior to the people around her, because unlike herself, they are drab and boring. Yet when her fantasy world is shattered, Miss Brill is forced to recognize the reality of her own drab and boring life, and this reality devastates her.

STUDENT SAMPLE 5B (Major Assignment)

General Comments

This composition reveals a perceptive understanding of "Horses of the Night" and a sensitivity not only to Vanessa's character, but also to the important contrast between Vanessa and Chris. Characters and events are effectively analysed throughout to develop the contrast between Vanessa's increasing insight and Chris' continuing dependence upon escape. Details are precise, word usage is effective, and sentences are frequently polished. This response is representative of Excellent (5) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

This composition deserves respect for its perceptive ideas, its insightful and carefully chosen detail, and its complex and unified organization. The complicated thesis is confidently sustained through details that enhance the clarity of the composition and contribute to the theme. A mature understanding of the tension in the story is revealed through analysis, organization, and tone.

Thought and Detail

The response begins by relating to the topic generally, suggesting that a "healthy imagination is almost vital to an individual's growth" and affords "insight and motivation," but eventually must be exchanged "for reasonable, adult-like insight." The topic is then focused on the idea that "although the power of one's imagination provides much positive growth in the childhood years, one must be able to integrate these dreams with the harshness of reality in order to realize one's full potential as an individual."

The writer's constant awareness of the contrast between Vanessa and Chris is used to develop the thesis. Development follows an examination of their characters and inner conflicts as Vanessa moves from the child's "jubilant imagination" to "reasonable adult-like insight" and Chris does not. Both are shown to be imaginative, but Vanessa realizes early on that "she did not believe" her assurance to Chris that he would sell vacuum cleaners during the depression. Vanessa initially struggles to be "as grown up as Chris" while he strives only "to block out the world around him." She increasingly understands that he has always "lived in another dimension," that he "longs to escape," and eventually makes his escape permanent. The composition includes the irony of Chris' final escape, which leaves him trapped in an institution and Vanessa "faced with the paradox of caring, but trying not to care too much."

Just as impressive as the insightful ideas are the carefully chosen details used to reinforce and develop them; for example, "Vanessa enquires with questioning eyes," "the tall, handsome lanky boy with the half slanted grey eyes," "the birth of her brother Roderick," "the Brick House," "as a civil engineer, he will build great bridges," "inability to exist in a world in which he, as a 'respector of persons,' found it impossible to cope with the questionable deeds of a possible God," and "she puts the saddle away once more, gently but ruthlessly, back into the cardboard box." The conclusion perceptively includes the idea that the transition to adult insight is "sometimes painful" but certainly "essential."

Growing Up.

A healthy imagination is almost vital to an individual's growth during his/her early years. Insight and motivation is provided for the individual who perceives the world around him as having more to offer than it realistically does. Much can be learned and experienced as one opens up his mind to the many possibilities present throughout a lifetime, although at the same time, the individual must learn to accept the fact that he cannot continue to live in his fantasy world. A time will occur in each individual's life when he/she realizes that their once jubilant imagination will have to be turned in, in exchange for reasonable, adult-like insight. Author Margaret Laurence in her short story "Horses of the Night", illustrates very vividly that although the power of one's imagination provides much positive growth in the childhood years, one must be able to integrate these dreams with the harshness of reality in order to realize one's full potential as an individual. Laurence expands on this idea through her display of character development and conflict.

The main character Vanessa, at the tender age of six, possesses quite a vibrant imagination, as many young children do. When told by her mother that her older cousin Chris will be coming down to Manawaka from Shallow Creek up north, Vanessa enquires

Organization

The introduction is successfully structured to focus on the topic and the unifying idea, and further establishes the method of development. The composition advances the idea that imagination is vital but must mature and give way to growing insight.

The idea is developed through the contrast between Vanessa and Chris, using an analysis of character: Vanessa's imagination helps her to mature and gain insight, while Chris continues to use imagination to shield himself from reality and doesn't realize his "full potential as an individual." The contrast between the two is further paralleled through inner conflict: Vanessa struggles to understand Chris, first from a child's perspective and then from a young adult's—and succeeds—while Chris continues to "block out the world around him."

The response focuses on the thesis and reinforces the contrast by the symbolism of the horses, which is subtly drawn into the conclusion. This complex organization maintains coherence through carefully constructed paragraphs. The contrasts are paralleled within each paragraph and the body paragraphs parallel one another. The writing contains effective transitions within and between paragraphs and thoughtfully relates the conclusion to the controlling idea, thus demonstrating the necessity of Vanessa's putting away childish coping mechanisms and "opening up a new package of realization."

Matters of Choice

Deliberate but subtle choices are made to show the contrast between Vanessa and Chris: "jubilant imagination," "integrate these dreams," "contrary to her expectations," "an unfortunate soul," and " the paradox of caring but trying not to care too much." Syntax is varied and usually demonstrates an ability to handle complex structures effectively. Quotations are apt and effective; for example, "She must be able to integrate the sadness of her dear cousin, 'whose talk never excluded her,' and be able to develop a degree of acceptance to carry on with her own life." The insightful parallel between the miniature saddle and the box, and Chris and imagination, is skilfully suggested by the word "packaging" in the conclusion.

Matters of Convention

Under the circumstances, the absence of error is impressive.

with questioning eyes [redacted] 98 people "could actually live up there, people who weren't Eskimos." Although her imagination is a huge part of her life, she also has the realistic expectation that her older cousin "wouldn't look down at her, due to her subtle age." Chris proved her wrong upon his arrival, and [redacted] contrary to her expectations, the tall handsome lanky boy [redacted] shared, if not enhanced Vanessa's imagination by the miniature toys and objects that he so carefully created for her. Chris's production of the [redacted] tiny saddle complete with stirrups and his criss-crossed brand, and the prancing, miniature puppet men reveals a very strong imagination on his part, also. Vanessa advances towards the stage of early adolescence when [redacted] her imagination draws further away from her during the time her grey-eyed cousin leaves [redacted] the Brick House, and returns as a travelling salesman. When [redacted] the vacuum cleaner is advertised by Chris, and the family [redacted] is not all that eager to purchase, Vanessa, full of hope, adds "I bet you'll sell a thousand, Chris." But in her mind she realizes that a few years back, there would [redacted] have been absolutely no doubt in this comment, but now, [redacted] she [redacted] knew as well as anyone else that she did not believe it.

[redacted]

Chris, perceived by Vanessa as the older, very knowledgable and aspiring civil engineer-to-be, began to fade slightly from Vanessa's life as her [redacted] once role model. The death of [redacted] Grandmother Connor, and the birth of her brother Roderick replaced her imagination and desire to be as old as Chris, and to "one day respond to his discussions with a burst of knowingness [redacted] to totally astound him." She realizes that she can [redacted] and will not be the sole person in his life that will receive [redacted] all his thought and attention, as "Dutchess and Fire Fly" do.

Vanessa's inner conflict to be "as grown up as Chris" runs parallel to [redacted] her cousin's inner conflict to block out the world around him, and exist only in the world he has created, where, as a civil engineer, he will build great bridges after completing college [redacted] in Winnipeg. Spending time in Shallow Creek with Chris after her father's death, Vanessa experiences the almost long-forgotten feelings of always wanting to be an important part of [redacted] her now twenty-one year old cousin. She now begins to see, and realize that Chris lives, and always has, lived in another dimension, [redacted] dimension in his own mind. His desire to "be anything he wants to be, if he just puts his mind to it," will not be fulfilled, as Vanessa sadly realizes, for he [redacted] was born [redacted] "unfortunate

soul, where poverty and a non-supportive family is a part of [redacted] the life he longs to escape. Society's system of "haves and have nots" has almost crushed Chris, driving him to [redacted] a last [redacted] resort of enlisting in the war. His eventual [redacted] commitment to the provincial mental hospital was due to his [redacted] inability to exist in a world [redacted] in which he, as a respector of persons, found it impossible to cope with [redacted] the questionable deeds of a possible God. As a result, Vanessa is faced with the paradox of caring, but trying not to care too much. She must be able to [redacted] integrate the sadness of her dear cousin, "whose talk never excluded her", and be able to develop a degree of acceptance to carry on with her own life. Vanessa [redacted] comes to terms with realization in her latter years, as she "puts the saddle away once more, gently but ruthlessly, back into the cardboard box.

In the final analysis, Laurence reveals how the turning point from a once carefree childhood, to the sometimes painful events of adulthood, can be a very emotional and difficult one. Through "Horses of the Night", she hopes to perhaps better convey the idea that a healthy imagination is essential, but that packing it up, and opening up a new package of realization is essential.

STUDENT SAMPLE 5C (Major Assignment)

General Comments

This response demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the play *Death of a Salesman* that is successfully related to the topic. Willy Loman is presented as a man whose imagination was so addictive that he created "a self-contained environment," bearing "only a nodding resemblance to reality," which he was "unable to live outside of." The insightful ideas are supported by carefully chosen details and are expressed fluently and confidently. The writing is virtually error free. This response is representative of Excellent (5) in all reporting categories.

Total Impression

This writing deserves respect for its insightful ideas, carefully chosen details, clear and concise style, and masterful organization. The composition deals with complex ideas skilfully and effectively, and succinctly conveys the essence of the play. The student is able to focus on the specific while maintaining an overall picture of the literature and of the composition. The response has a powerful but unassuming and convincing tone.

Thought and Detail

The composition introduces the idea that "imagination [is] a driving force" and then more specifically suggests that imagination can trap a person in a "self-contained environment" to which one can become "addicted," as Willy Loman does, to the extent that "in the outside world he is hostile and confused" and chooses suicide, realizing he is "worth more dead than alive." The composition builds up to the idea that "Death of a Salesman" is a play about "addiction to imagination." The ideas are introduced that both imagination and drive are necessary in the successful "pursuit of a goal," and that Willy Loman fails because, although "Willy possesses the imagination to succeed, he lacks the drive." Just as perceptive as the ideas are the well-chosen details that reinforce them, often showing impressive insight; for example, "Willy also tries to imagine his own present . . . [as] a success: ushered in at a moment's notice by admiring clients," "He frequently confers with a mirage of his dead brother, Ben," "Biff, once a championship quarterback, had become an aimless drifter," "in his own perfect world, there is no reason for him to kill himself," and "Ironically, it is Biff, his father's favorite, who delivers the final blow to his father's wounded imagination." Reference to the poem "The Song of Wandering Aengus" in the conclusion serves both to reconnect with the opening and to draw a parallel to life in general, in essence perceptively seeing Willy Loman not just as a pathetic character in fiction, but also as a human being who pursued a dream unattainable for him.

This Is Your Brain On Imagination ... Any Questions?

Yeats' poem, "The Song of the Wandering Aengus", discusses the nature of imagination as a driving force in one's life. Arthur Miller's play, Death of A Salesman, conveys this idea as well, but looks at a more sombre angle. Miller seeks to prove that human imagination can create a self-contained environment, one which often bears only a nodding resemblance to reality. In Death of A Salesman, the protagonist, Willy Loman, lives in such an environment, and as proven through the course of the play, is unable to live outside of it.

Willy Loman, the aging salesman in the play, lives in a world of the imagination. Miller structures the play such that many of the setting shifts are prompted by Willy's recollections. However, Willy also tries to imagine his own present. He imagines himself a success: noticed in at a moment's notice by admiring clients, on friendly terms with the Mayor of Providence, and supporting his family without any difficulty. He frequently confers with a mirage of his dead brother Ben, who "walked out of the jungle" a rich man. Willy, according to Willy, has achieved his goals. He has a doting family with two sons who personify success, and, most importantly, is "well-liked" by everyone he meets.

Reality, Miller shows, has no place in Willy's delusions. Willy is far from a success. He is unable to sell enough to support his family, and has to secretly borrow from his neighbor Charlie to bring home what appears to be a reasonable wage. He is still on the road in his sixties, and, when he requests a change from his boss, he is "let go". His sons appear to be headed down an equivalent road: Biff, once a championship quarterback, has become an aimless drifter, and Happy is a compulsive womanizer. The dialogue of the supporting characters indicates that much of what Willy professes to be is simply a lie. Though the lie might appear to be acted out for the benefit of others, it is simply for Willy's well-being, as almost everyone else sees right through the mask. As Biff says: "He never knew who he was ..."

Organization

This composition is structured inductively, building to an insightful and unifying idea. The introduction provides direction in that it encourages the reader to discover how and why Willy is "unable to live outside" of the "self-contained environment" created by his imagination. A strong sense of paragraph unity is evident as each paragraph is introduced by a topic sentence, developed with carefully chosen detail, and concluded with an apt quote. Transition between paragraphs is effective. Coherence is maintained as the essay flows from the first body paragraph, which shows how Willy "lives in a world of the imagination," to a contrasting idea in the second body paragraph, which begins with "Reality, Miller shows, has no place in Willy's delusions" and then, in the third body paragraph, to a complication resulting from the contrast in "Miller demontrates that not only does Willy live in a fantasy world, he has grown dependent on it." Coherence within paragraphs is achieved through effective use of transitions.

Matters of Choice

The writing illustrates a clear and fluent style. Complex ideas and precise details are succinctly and effectively expressed, often in a polished manner. Diction is impressive, as in "sombre," "nodding resemblance," "ushered in," "confers with a mirage," "headed down an equivalent road," "an aimless drifter," "a compulsive womanizer," and "the correlation is apparent." There is strong connotative meaning associated with the word "addiction." Minor additions that are the result of editing add texture to the writing; for example, "his dead brother Ben" and "has to secretly borrow." Syntax is stylistically mature, controlled, and varied—exhibiting, for example, natural and inverted order, parallel structure, and repetition for effect: "Willy, according to Willy, has achieved his goals." The student is able to comment on Miller's style periodically. This composition displays confident authorship.

Matters of Convention

This composition is virtually free from error, which is impressive considering its length and complexity. Difficult words are spelled correctly, and punctuation includes accurate use of colons, semicolons, and the apostrophe. Complex grammatical structures—such as "By this point of the play, the correlation is apparent: Willy is rational and unafraid in his own environment; in the outside world he is hostile and confused"— are flawless.

Miller demonstrates that not only does Willy live in a fantasy world, he has grown dependent on it and cannot survive anywhere else. Willy's environment slowly crumbles throughout the play. It is revealed early on that Willy is becoming suicidal: he has "smashed up" the car several times, and has hooked a device into the natural gas line in preparation. These are signs that he is beginning to emerge from his imagination, as, in his own perfect world, there is no reason for him to kill himself. Biff's return, and Willy's being fired force Willy to confront his situation the way it actually is. Willy realizes that he is worth more dead than alive; with his death, his family would receive a large sum from insurance. He decides that suicide is the best solution in a "conversation" with Ben. By this point of the play, the correlation is apparent: Willy is rational and unafraid in his own environment; in the outside world he is hostile and confused. For instance, a simple tape recorder scares him in Howard, his employer's, office. The reader realizes that Willy no longer belongs in the real world. Ironically, it is Biff, his father's favourite, who delivers the final blow to his father's wounded imagination: "I'm not a success, Dad, and neither are you!"

Death of A Salesman is, in effect, a play about addiction to imagination. Willy wrongly perceives himself to be a success, and does not attempt to follow through on this image in real life. For Willy Loman, the image is enough. Miller creates an interesting imbalance: though Willy possesses the imagination to succeed, he lacks the drive. Miller is suggesting that both are necessary in the pursuit of a goal. Like the speaker in Yeats' "The Song of the Wandering Aengus" once something has been imagined, one must "find out where (it) has gone."

SUMMARY OF EXCELLENT (5) WRITING

Writing a composition that will earn Excellent (5) in all reporting categories is a goal for many students. Some, however, may be unaware of the characteristics of writing at the standard of excellence. These sample compositions are NOT intended to be blueprints to emulate, but to illustrate some common characteristics of the features of thoughtfulness, effectiveness, and correctness of Excellent (5) writing.

Thoughtfulness

A perceptive understanding of the topic inspires thoughtful, insightful, and sometimes imaginative personal responses to the minor assignment—responses that may be lively, humorous, touching, or reflective. Precise detail vitalizes the writing and fully develops the controlling idea. Ideas are considered from a number of angles, and the intricate, subtle nature of the ideas or experiences are recognized. Personal insight and a connecting of self with humanity is evident in the conclusions. In the major assignment, this perceptive understanding of literature and the topic is revealed as students formulate a clear, complex, and individual thesis and personalize the topic and the organization of the essay to fit the literature chosen. The writing effectively reveals impressive insight into the topic and the literature chosen. Details are carefully chosen with the whole of the essay and literature in mind, resulting in effective, coherent development. Details not only elaborate ideas but also provide examples of irony, paradox, contrast, and complexity, as the student reveals these facets of the literature. These student-writers are able to analyse, synthesize and even evaluate ideas and techniques.

Effectiveness

Writing at the Excellent (5) level demonstrates an ability to select fact and language skilfully in order to develop an idea consistently and confidently. Organization in both minor and major responses serves a specific purpose. The writing contains repetition, parallelism, contrast, and figurative language used smoothly and purposefully. Sentence length is varied for effect, and complex syntax is demonstrated in parallel structure, inversion, subordination, and balanced sentences. Often, a variety of purposes are fulfilled at the same time in the choice of a quote, the phrasing of a detail, or the construction of a sentence or paragraph, confirming the impression that this is effectively crafted writing. The writing conveys a sense of student ownership of the literature and the topic, drawing the reader into a cogent discussion that is fluent and confident.

Correctness

Writing at the Excellent (5) level demonstrates an impressive, insightful, and perceptive understanding of the literature. These student writers not only know plot and understand theme, but they also appreciate the author's tone and style and can comment on them implicitly or explicitly. The writing displays a precise use of language without distracting errors. Spelling of difficult words is almost always correct, punctuation of complex structures is accurate, and grammar is handled expertly. These student-writers display an exceptional command of the vocabulary, structure, and conventions of language.

SECTION FOUR
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

SUMMARY

The following chart summarizes the key features of Satisfactory (3) papers and Excellent (5) papers on the Major Assignment: Literature Composition.

SATISFACTORY (3) FEATURES	EXCELLENT (5) FEATURES
Choice of Literature	**Choice of Literature**
• appropriate	• appropriate
Planning	**Planning**
• typically, the rough draft is recopied	• brief outline provides a plan
Thoughtfulness	**Thoughtfulness**
• generalized focus on topic	• topic personalized to fit literature chosen
• straightforward, literal interpretation of literature, partial interpretation or "black-and-white" interpretation	• perceptive understanding of literature, thoughtful and complete understanding of nuances, subtleties, complexities, ambiguities
• some insight that could be developed more	• insightful ideas reveal a thoughtful appreciation of literature
• appropriate, generally accurate detail	• precise, accurate, and well-chosen detail; details help to elaborate and explore ideas fully
• recognizes author's general purpose	• aware of theme and sensitive to author's tone and style
• distance between student writer and literature is apparent	• internalized appreciation of literature is apparent
• lists and summarizes	• analyses, synthesizes, and evaluates
Effectiveness	**Effectiveness**
• well organized in a direct and predictable manner; broad thesis	• organization is complex, without being complicated; allows effective exploration of a focused thesis
• plot often used for structure; main idea restated in conclusion	• paragraphs develop ideas through contrast, parallelism, and relationship of ideas
• occasional loss of coherence	• coherent; consistent awareness of how the parts relate to the whole
• attempts made at effective diction and syntax; some awkwardness	• precise diction and complex syntax; fluent

• writing is clear, though perhaps "flat"—uninvolved	• writing is varied and effective
• confident, matter-of-fact tone	• confident tone; personal voice; individual style
• writing is didactic; writer sees response as an examination answer	• writing is a dialogue with the reader; writer conveys an awareness of audience and involvement in literature
Correctness	**Correctness**
• narrow but correct interpretation of literature	• accurate, perceptive, and thoughtful interpretation of literature
• generally defensible but generalized detail	• apt use of quotations and well-chosen detail
• conventions usually correct; despite errors, control of conventions demonstrated	• impressive absence of error given complexity of discussion; control of conventions never in doubt

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon these comparisons and contrasts, the following points could be considered by teachers when helping motivated students to improve their writing and move beyond the Satisfactory (3) level:

- The student needs to understand the distinction between the general and the specific in order to formulate an idea and then support it fully.

- The student needs to have a complete understanding of literature studied—the importance of details in relationship to plot, the literature's theme and universality, its style and tone—in order to write beyond the satisfactory level. The student needs to internalize literature studied, to feel comfortable with the literature. Comfort with subject matter leads to confidence in exploration of ideas.

- The student needs to gain an appreciation for the complexity and subtlety of literature as it reflects life so that he or she feels comfortable dealing with its ambiguity, intricacy, contradiction, and ambivalence, and does not seek definitive answers or absolutes.

- The student needs to take personal ownership of an idea and develop it as the topic and literature chosen direct, rather than depending solely on a broad, generalized statement from a preamble. The comments in the preamble can be used as a springboard for a student's own idea about the topic as it relates to the literature chosen.

- The student needs to go beyond listing and summarizing; the student needs also to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate.

- The student needs to plan, to outline an exploration of the ideas and details to be used, and in which order, so as to have a context within which to work and maintain coherence.

- The student needs to develop confidence in his or her own perceptions, knowledge, understanding, and personal writing style in order to write smoothly and convincingly.

- The student needs to become skilled in the use of words, complex structures, and conventions to develop the freedom to express thought effectively.

- The student needs to be reminded that sentences can be restructured for effect and that editing may clarify and enhance writing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

Most probably, teachers are already aware of the points listed above, and they and their students are working to employ skills and techniques that will result in good writing. We hope that suggestions made in this section will serve to reinforce sound instructional practice and will help students and teachers more clearly understand how the expectations of the English 30 Diploma Examination, Part A, can be most successfully met.

The personal response can serve to develop confident, articulate writers by allowing students to find their own voice—the personality within the writing—and to see themselves as connected to the whole of humanity in its struggles, successes, and failures. If students are consistently encouraged to write personal responses to literature and thus make these connections, insight and confidence should develop that can subsequently be channelled to the more formal writing of literary analysis. The personal response, besides developing style and relating to theme in order to see connectedness, will also provide incentive to learn more effective expression. Students writing about themselves want to be understood and will be motivated to learn how to communicate fluently and cogently. Once they have something to say, students are more open to discovering and experimenting with the methods and techniques that will make it easier to express themselves more effectively. The personal response also provides an opportunity to consider spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax.

Students need to explore and to analyse literature fully, seeing it not only as a functional work, but also as a window into the human condition, rapturous or disappointing as that condition may be. They need to use close reading skills in order to notice detail and appreciate the author's craft. After a selection has been completely analysed, it needs to be put back together—read again in its entirety—to be appreciated more fully and more maturely. This cannot be done with every piece of literature but if this strategy is consistently practised over three years, students will begin to develop their own analytical skills. In addition, students need to see the other side of the coin. They need exposure to literature that will contrast the plot, theme, and style of what has already been studied, so they can begin to appreciate that there are few absolutes—that life and the literature that reflects it both have

misguided heroes, empty victories, contradiction, and ambiguity. Reading a variety of literature helps students to see contrasts and make comparisons between ideas, characters, and themes—in other words, to synthesize and evaluate. If this type of instruction spans the three years of high school English classes, students will develop in experience and confidence.

The goal of English literature and language teaching is to develop the communicative potential of students and to make them more thoughtful. As teachers, we know we are not miracle workers on a production line; we must work with the students' abilities as they are when the students arrive in our classrooms. But we can teach effectively and sensitively by helping students to appreciate and internalize literature, to acquire the skills to process information, and to find their own best writing style and voice. The fact that they may become effective readers, thinkers, and writers who will not only do well on the English 30 final, but also become more mature, tolerant, and confident human beings, is probably another reason to keep giving and marking these assignments.

APPENDIX A
ENGLISH 30 WRITTEN-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS
JUNE 1991

Instructions

1. **Read "The Song of Wandering Aengus" carefully and thoughtfully before you start the writing assignments.**

2. **Read BOTH the Minor and Major assignments before you start writing.**

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS[1]

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire a-flame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

William Butler Yeats
Irish poet and playwright, 1865-1939

[1]Aengus — pronounced "Angus"

MINOR ASSIGNMENT: Personal Response to Literature
(Suggested time: approximately 30 minutes)

W.B. Yeats' poem "The Song of Wandering Aengus" suggests that our capacity to imagine influences our lives, providing a sense of purpose that serves to inspire and motivate.

Choose a quotation from the poem and relate it to your own experience of the influence of imagination.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT: Literature Composition
(Suggested time: approximately 1½ to 2 hours)

The power of imagination may influence an individual in either a positive or a negative manner. Literature offers many examples of the ways in which imagination acts as an influence in individual lives. One such example is the poem "The Song of Wandering Aengus," which uses imagery to convey the idea that imagination becomes the central motivating force in the speaker's life.

Write a composition based on other literature you have studied that examines the influence of imagination in people's lives. What idea does the author develop regarding human imagination? Provide specific details from the literature you have chosen that will support and develop your controlling idea.

Guidelines for Writing

- **CHOOSE** your selection from relevant short stories, novels, plays, poems, other literature, or films that you have studied in your high school English classes. You may choose to discuss more than one selection.
- **FOCUS** your composition on the topic. Provide only those details that support your controlling idea. You may wish to consider discussing the significance of the author's use of such elements as character development, setting, irony, contrast, conflict, imagery, symbol, etc.
- **ORGANIZE** your composition so that your ideas are clearly and coherently developed.

APPENDIX B
ENGLISH 30 SCORING GUIDES, JUNE 1991

Minor revisions were made to these scoring guides in January 1992 for the Minor Assignment, Writing Skills, at 2 and 3, and the Major Assignment, Conventions, at 3 and 4.

Minor Assignment: Personal Response to Literature— Scoring Guide

Thought and Detail (curriculum concepts 1, and 3 to 13 inclusive)

When marking **Thought and Detail**, the marker should consider
- the quality of the unifying ideas
- how effectively the response addresses the question
- how clearly the response is developed (by examples, specific details, analogies, etc.)

5 **EXCELLENT**: Ideas expressed are insightful, carefully considered, and confident. Support is precise, thoughtfully selected, and/or imaginative. A perceptive response to the task is demonstrated implicitly or explicitly. Such writing is often lively and/or imaginative.

4 **PROFICIENT**: Ideas expressed are thoughtful. Support is relevant, purposeful, and, where appropriate, concrete. A thoughtful response to the task is demonstrated implicitly or explicitly. Such writing demonstrates an attempt to go beyond the bare requirements of the task.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: Ideas expressed are appropriate but predictable. Support is general or details are commonplace. A conventional response to the task is demonstrated implicitly or explicitly. Such writing fulfils the task but does so matter-of-factly.

2 **LIMITED**: Ideas expressed are superficial and underdeveloped. Support is generalized, vague, and/or repetitive. Such writing does not fulfil the task adequately.

1 **POOR**: Ideas are only marginally relevant and are largely underdeveloped. Support is inappropriate or lacking. Such writing may be frustrating for the reader.

INS **INSUFFICIENT**: The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfil the assignment as stated, **OR** the response is so deficient in length that it is not possible to assess thought and detail.

Writing Skills (curriculum concepts 2, 3, 4, 5)

When marking **Writing Skills**, the marker should consider the effectiveness of the total impression created by the writer's voice and the extent to which the writing demonstrates control of

- diction
- syntax
- mechanics
- grammar

5 **EXCELLENT**: The writing is skilfully structured and fluent. Diction is appropriate and effective. Syntax is controlled and varied. The relative absence of error is impressive under the circumstances, and minor errors do not detract from the clarity or effectiveness of communication.

4 **PROFICIENT**: The writing is clear and generally fluent. Diction is appropriate and specific. Syntax is controlled. Minor errors do not reduce the clarity of communication.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: The writing is clear. Diction is adequate but tends to be general rather than specific. Syntax is generally straightforward but occasionally awkward. Despite errors, student demonstrates control of conventions.

2 **LIMITED**: The writing may be unclear and/or ineffective. Diction is inappropriate and/or imprecise. Syntax is immature and/or frequently awkward. Errors may reduce communication.

1 **POOR**: The writing is frequently unclear and not fluent. Diction is frequently inaccurate. Syntax is confused and uncontrolled. Frequent errors impede communication.

NOTE: *It is important to recognize that student responses to the Personal Response Assignment will vary from writing that treats personal views and ideas analytically and rather formally to writing that explores ideas experimentally and informally. Consequently, evaluation of the personal response on the diploma examination will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt's suggestion:*

> The evaluation of the answer would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the [student] has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether necessarily he has thought about it in the way an adult would, or given an adult's "correct" answer.[1]

[1]Rosenblatt, Louise. "The Reader's Contribution in the Literary Experience." An interview with Lionel Wilson in *The English Quarterly 1* (Spring, 1981): 3–12.

Major Assignment: Literature Composition—Scoring Guide

Total Impression (curriculum concepts 1 to 13 inclusive)

When marking Total Impression, the marker should consider the extent to which the writing demonstrates

- **coherence and unity**
- **fluent expression of ideas**
- **thoroughness of discussion**
- **thoughtful and confident presentation of ideas**

5 **EXCELLENT**: This writing communicates thoughtfully and fluently. Such writing deserves respect.

4 **PROFICIENT**: This writing has something to say and does so clearly. Such writing prompts attention.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: This writing communicates adequately. Such writing is acceptable.

2 **LIMITED**: This writing communicates little and does so ineffectively or incompletely. Such writing does not satisfy the reader.

1 **POOR**: This writing says very little or leaves the reader to guess at the writer's intentions. Such writing frustrates the reader.

Thought and Detail (curriculum concepts 1, and 3 to 13 inclusive)

When marking **Thought and Detail**, the marker should consider
- how effectively the writer's ideas relate to the assignment
- what thesis or unifying idea(s) is (are) developed in the writing
- what details have been selected to support and develop the thesis
- the quality of the unifying idea(s)

5 **EXCELLENT**: Insightful ideas are supported by carefully chosen details. Literary interpretations are perceptive and defensible. The selection of literature to be discussed is appropriate for the topic and the level of discussion.

4 **PROFICIENT**: Insightful ideas are supported by appropriate details, **OR** conventional ideas are supported by carefully chosen details. Literary interpretations are thoughtful and defensible. The selection of literature to be discussed is appropriate for the topic and the level of discussion.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: Conventional ideas are supported by appropriate details. Literary interpretations are defensible. The selection of literature to be discussed is appropriate for the topic and the level of discussion.

2 **LIMITED**: Conventional ideas are weakly supported by appropriate details. Literary interpretations are incomplete or superficial. The selection of literature to be discussed is questionable in that it may not supply significant supporting details; **OR** the selection of literature is appropriate, but significant supporting details have not been selected.

1 **POOR**: Scant ideas or unsupported generalities and details do not develop the topic. Literary interpretations may not be defensible. The selection of literature to be discussed is inappropriate; **OR** the selection of literature to be discussed is appropriate, but the writer exhibits little understanding of the literature or of the topic. The details from literature obscure the ideas or are irrelevant to the discussion.

INS **INSUFFICIENT**:

- The student has written so little that it is not possible to assess thought and detail, **OR**
- No reference has been made to literature studied, **OR**
- The only literary reference present is to the selection on the examination, **OR**
- The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfil the assignment as stated

Organization (curriculum concepts 2, 3, 4, 5)

When marking **Organization**, the marker should consider how effectively the writing demonstrates

- a focused and ordered discussion
- establishment and maintenance of a controlling idea
- a developed and concluded discussion of ideas

5 **EXCELLENT**: The introduction is successfully constructed to provide direction for the reader and/or to provoke further reading. A personal focus is established. The controlling idea is successfully sustained and developed in a clear and coherent manner. The conclusion is related thoughtfully to the controlling idea.

4 **PROFICIENT**: The introduction is constructed to provide direction for the reader. The controlling idea is focused and is generally sustained. The development of the controlling idea is clear and generally coherent. The conclusion is related appropriately to the controlling idea.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: The introduction is constructed to provide a general direction for the reader. The controlling idea provides a focus at the beginning that is mechanically maintained. The development of the controlling idea is clear, but coherence occasionally falters. The conclusion is functionally related to the main idea.

2 **LIMITED**: The introduction, if present, is perfunctory, i.e., related in a minimal or limited way to the rest of the essay. A focused controlling idea is lacking **OR** is not maintained in the development of the composition. The ideas are not clearly developed. The conclusion, if present, is not functional.

1 **POOR**: The introduction, if present, is not functional, i.e., does not control or relate to the rest of the essay. A controlling idea is lacking. The topic is not developed or is developed incoherently. The conclusion, if present, is obscure.

Matters of Choice (curriculum concept 3)

When marking **Matters of Choice**, the marker should consider the extent to which the writing exhibits effective control of

- tone, including the total impression of stylistic control
- diction, including any connotative language, imagery, and/or idiomatic expressions
- syntax, including such choices as parallelism, balance, inversion, and sentence length and variety

5 **EXCELLENT**: Choices appear to have been made deliberately to achieve a particular purpose. The selection and use of words and sentence structures is effective and sometimes polished. Diction is effective and specific. Syntax is controlled and varied. The writing is precise and fluent.

4 **PROFICIENT**: Choices frequently appear to have been made deliberately to achieve a particular purpose. The selection and use of words and sentence structures is generally effective. Diction is appropriate. Syntax is controlled. The writing is clear and generally fluent.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: Choices occasionally appear to have been made deliberately to achieve a particular purpose. The selection and use of words and sentence structures is generally clear. Diction is adequate but may be lacking is specificity. Syntax is generally straightforward but may be occasionally awkward. The writing is clear.

2 **LIMITED**: Choices seldom appear to have been made deliberately to achieve a particular purpose. The selection and use of words and sentence structures is frequently ineffective. Diction is imprecise and/or inappropriate. Syntax is frequently awkward and/or immature. The writing is often vague, redundant, and/or confusing.

1 **POOR**: Choices do not appear to have been made deliberately to achieve a particular purpose. The selection and use of words and sentence structures is frequently inaccurate and ineffective. Diction is frequently inaccurate and/or overgeneralized. Syntax is confused and uncontrolled. The writing is frequently unclear and not fluent.

Matters of Convention (curriculum concept 3)

When marking **Matters of Convention**, the marker should consider the correctness of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.)
- grammar (agreement of subject-verb/pronoun-antecedent, pronoun reference, etc.)

Proportion of error to complexity and length of response must also be considered.

5 **EXCELLENT**: This writing is essentially free from errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response.

4 **PROFICIENT**: This writing is essentially free from errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Errors that are present do not reduce the clarity of communication.

3 **SATISFACTORY**: This writing has occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar. Despite errors, the student demonstrates control of conventions.

2 **LIMITED**: This writing has frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar. Student demonstrates lack of control of conventions.

1 **POOR**: This writing has errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar that are both noticeable and jarring. These errors impede communication.